



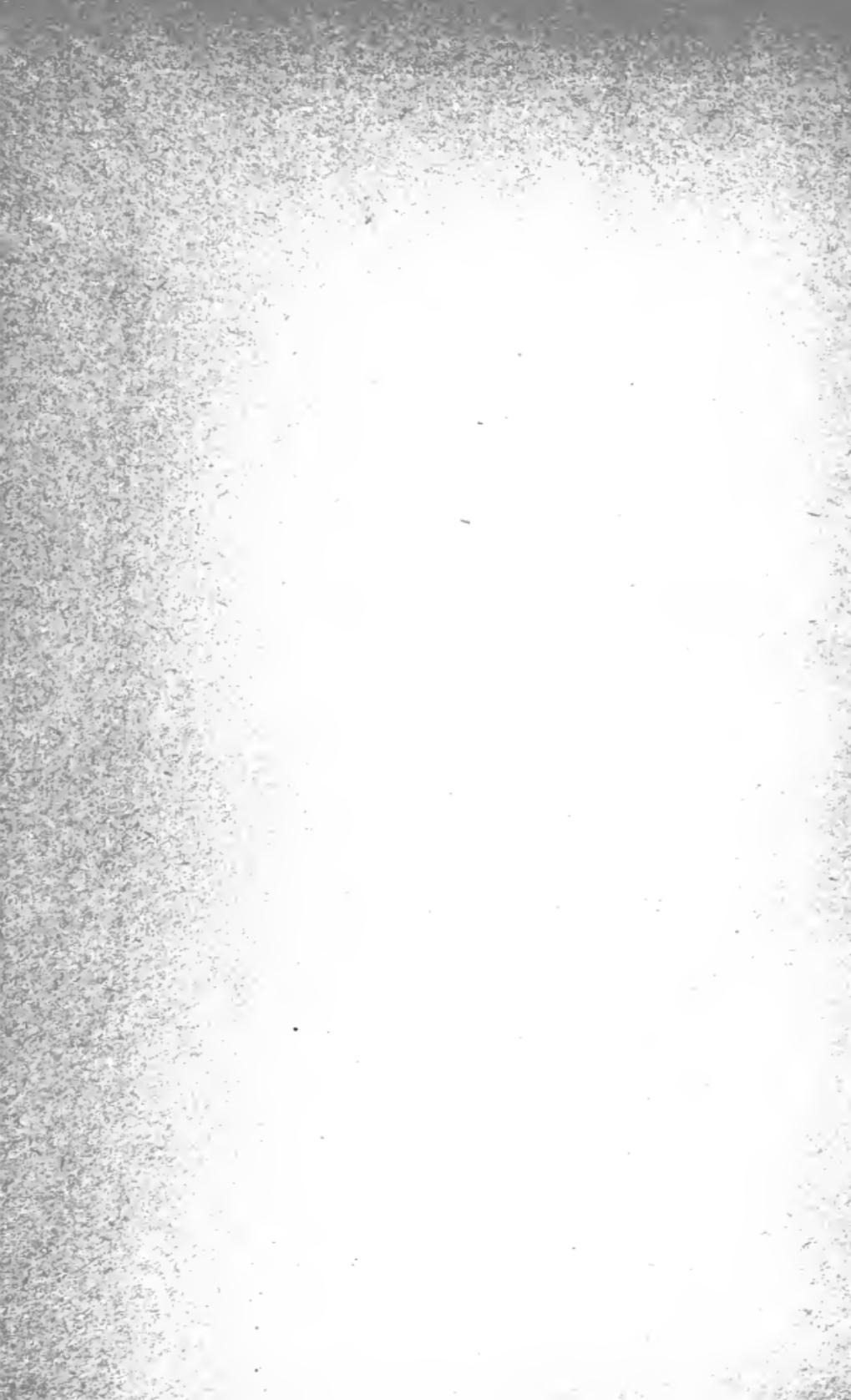
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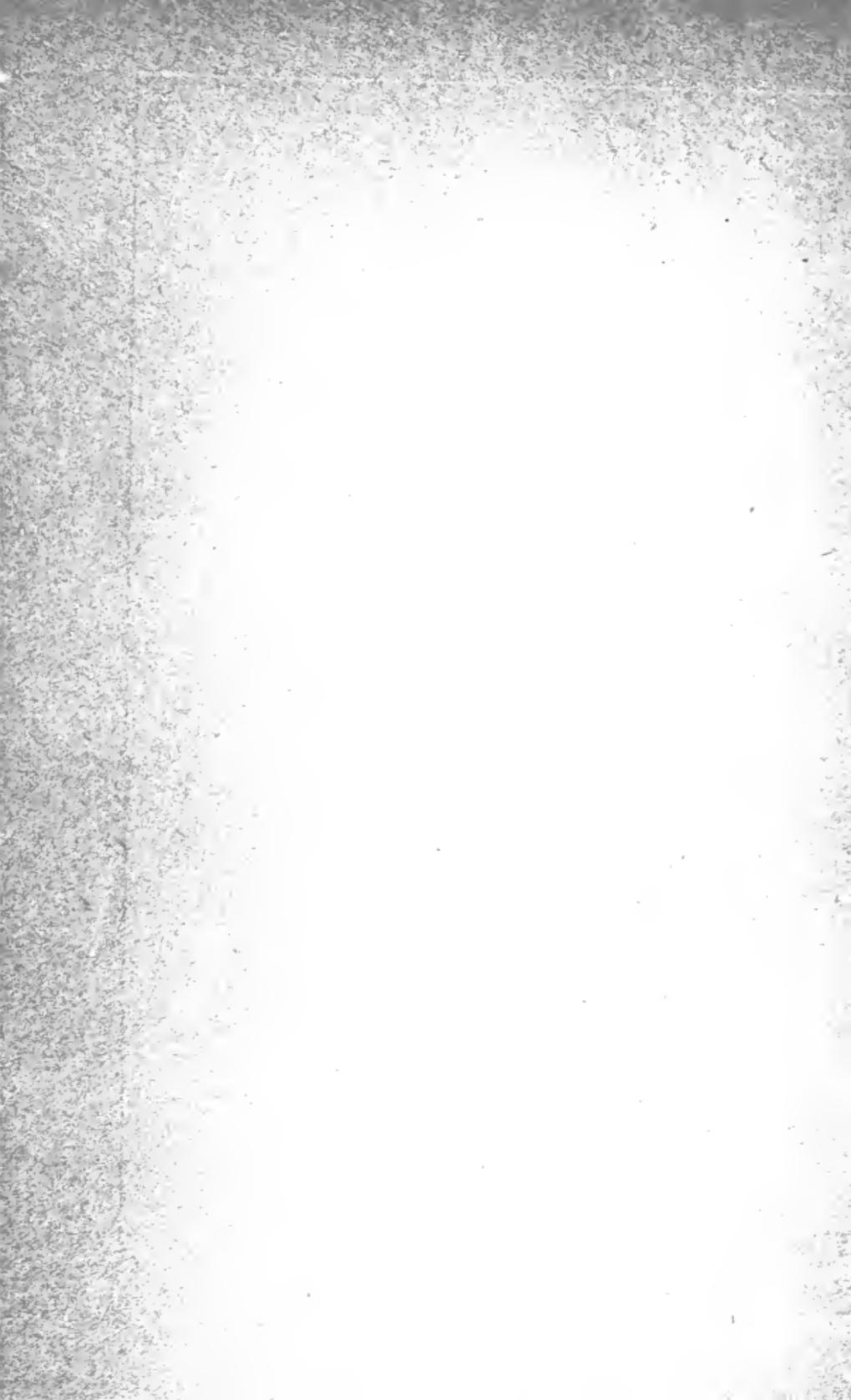
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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN:

A

BOOK

FOR

THE YOUNG AND THE OLD:

FOR ALL.

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings."—PROVERBS, xxii. 29.

CAMBRIDGE:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.
M DCCC LII.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1852, by
S A M U E L H U T C H I N S,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of
Massachusetts.

TO

MY VENERABLE FATHER,

who, throughout a very long life, has
aimed to benefit his fellow-beings, and
to be governed by honorable principles
of action, this book is

VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY HIS SON.

A TRIBUTE
TO THE MEMORY OF DR. FRANKLIN, BY DR. CHANNING.

“Another
American Name
Will live in History,
YOUR

FRANKLIN:

and
THE KITE
Which brought Lightning from Heaven
Will be seen sailing in the Clouds
by
Remote Posterity,
When the City where he dwelt
May be known only
by
Its Ruins ! ”

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BENEFICIAL GIFTS.

“ I HAVE considered, that, among artisans, good apprentices are most likely to make good citizens, and, having myself been bred to a manual art, printing, in my native town, and afterwards assisted to set up my business in Philadelphia by kind loans of money from two friends there, which was the foundation of my fortune, and of all the utility in life that may be ascribed to me, I wish to be useful even after my death, if possible, in forming and advancing other young men, that may be serviceable to their country in both of those towns.”— B. FRANKLIN.

“ THE experiment of nearly half a century has not produced all the beneficial results, which were anticipated by Dr. Franklin, from his bequest to Boston and Philadelphia.”— JARED SPARKS.

P R E F A C E .

It has not been the object of the author of this book to write a life of Dr. Franklin, but to present remarkable traits of his character, and to quote some of his observations upon various interesting and important subjects.

It is to be hoped that the perusal of this book will inspire the reader with a laudable emulation,—with a desire to become wiser and better. The learned editor of Franklin's Works (JARED SPARKS) says, that “it was Franklin's primary object not so much to become distinguished by the accomplishment of the art of writing, as to acquire the power of *acting on the minds of others*, and of communicating, in the most attractive and effectual manner, such discoveries as he might make, and his schemes *for the general improvement, the moral culture, the comfort and happiness of mankind.*”

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN's industrious and *temperate* habits enabled him, in the course of his long life, to write a great deal on various subjects. Many of his valuable writings have been lost;

yet ten large octavo volumes of his works have been published, embracing his autobiography ; essays on religious and moral subjects and the economy of life ; essays on general politics, commerce, and political economy ; essays and tracts, historical and political, before the American Revolution ; political papers during and after the American Revolution ; letters and papers on electricity ; letters and papers on philosophical subjects ; and his correspondence.

The author of “ Biographical Sketches of the Signers of the Declaration of American Independence ” says, that “ probably a greater man than Benjamin Franklin never lived, regarded with that analytical discrimination which distinguishes true greatness in inherent qualities, rather than in brilliant external displays ; and in almost every particular characteristic of a man, he presented **A MODEL OF EXCELLENCE** of the highest standard.”

The wisdom and good works of Dr. Franklin are universally acknowledged, and they will continue to benefit mankind centuries hence.

“ So works the man of just renown
On men, when centuries have flown :
For what a good man would attain,
The narrow bounds of life restrain ;
And this the balm that Genius gives, —
Man dies, but after death he lives.”

CAMBRIDGE, SEPTEMBER, 1852.

THE
YOUTHFUL YEARS
OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

"I would not waste my spring of YOUTH
In idle dalliance. I would plant rich seeds,
To blossom in my manhood, and bear fruit
When I am old."

I N T R O D U C T O R Y.

GREAT were the merits of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, the printer, the philosopher, and the statesman ! His name is one of the glories of our country, as it is one of the lights of the world.

But how did he acquire an honorable distinction among his fellow-men ? By honesty, industry, frugality, and study. From his infancy he was passionately fond of reading, and freely spent his money for useful books. In his boyhood, he first bought Bunyan's works in separate little volumes, and afterwards sold them to enable him to buy Burton's *Historical Collections* ; these

were small books, being forty volumes in all. In his father's little library he discovered a book, entitled *An Essay to do Good*, (by Cotton Mather,) which he read. That essay gave him a turn of thinking, which had an influence on some of the principal subsequent events of his life.

The celebrity to which Franklin ultimately attained excites a desire to know his parentage. "My father," says he, "had an excellent constitution, was of middle stature, well set, and very strong. He could draw prettily, and was skilled a little in music. But his great excellence was his sound understanding, and his solid judgment in prudential matters, both in private and public affairs. My mother had likewise an excellent constitution. I never knew either my father or mother to have any sickness, but that of which they died." Their bodies were buried together in Boston. A number of years after their burial, their son Benjamin placed a marble stone over their graves, with this inscription:—

"Josiah Franklin and Abiah, his wife, lie here interred. They lived lovingly together in wedlock fifty-five years; and without an estate, or any gainful employment, by constant labor, and honest industry, (with God's blessing,) maintained a large family comfortably, and brought up thirteen children and seven grandchildren reputably. From this instance, reader, be encouraged to diligence in thy calling, and distrust not Providence. He was a pious and prudent man;

she a discreet and virtuous woman. Their youngest son, in filial regard to their memory, places this stone. J. F. born 1655; died 1744. $\text{Æt. } 89.$ A. F. born 1667; died 1752. $\text{Æt. } 85.$ "

The marble stone on which this epitaph was inscribed having become greatly dilapidated, another monument has been erected in the place of it by citizens of Boston, and beneath the original inscription are engraved these words:—

"The marble tablet, bearing the above inscription, having been dilapidated by the ravages of time, a number of citizens, entertaining the most profound veneration for the memory of the illustrious Benjamin Franklin, and desirous of reminding succeeding generations that he was born in Boston, A. D. MDCCVI., erected this obelisk over the graves of his parents, MDCCCXXVII."

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN A PRINTER.

FRANKLIN'S parents wished him to be a minister of the gospel, but that wish could not be gratified for the want of pecuniary means for the necessary education. Consequently, Benjamin, at the age of ten years, was taken into the service of his father. Disliking the business, (that of a tallow-chandler and soap-boiler,) he expressed a great desire to go to sea; but his father declared against it. Young Franklin's dislike to his business continuing, he was placed on trial for some days with a cutler; but that pursuit was

also abandoned. Finally, Benjamin's inclination for reading determined his father to make a **P R I N T E R** of him. This philosopher in embryo, then, was shortly bound* as an apprentice to the printing business, at the early age of twelve years. In a little time he made great progress in the art. Meanwhile, all his leisure was diligently devoted to self-improvement, and he often sat up reading the greater part of the night. There being a newspaper printed in the office where he worked, he undertook to write a communication for it, which was accepted. Encouraged by this attempt at writing for the public, he wrote and sent several other pieces to the press, which were printed, and highly applauded.

During his apprenticeship he formed an acquaintance with a number of "bookish lads." With one of them he often engaged in extemporaneous and written disputations. He bought an odd volume of the *Spectator*, read it over and over, was much delighted with it, and tried to imitate its style. He turned some of its tales into verse, and after a while turned them back again into prose. He continued to devote much time to the reading of books ; among which were Locke on "The Human Understanding," Messrs. de Port-Royal on "The Art of Thinking," and

* He was bound as an apprentice to his brother James, who had established himself in Boston, as a printer.

Xenophon's "Memorable Things of Socrates"; very good books, and doubtless they had a very good effect upon the precocious understanding of young Franklin.

In consequence of a disagreement with his brother James, he did not serve the prescribed time of his apprenticeship; this he confesses to have been one of the first errors of his life. Leaving Boston at the age of seventeen, he repaired to Philadelphia,* where he employed himself in printing. In a short time he sailed for London, where he again resorted to printing † for support. While in London, at this time, he wrote and printed a metaphysical tract. At the age of twenty he returned to Philadelphia, pursued the occupation of printing, wrote several amusing pieces for a newspaper under the title of the *Busy Body*, established a newspaper, wrote a tract concerning paper currency, and, besides getting married ‡ and being engaged in other affairs, he assisted in laying the foundation of the

* He arrived in Philadelphia on a Sabbath morning, with but a single dollar in his pocket. His uncouth appearance attracted considerable notice in the streets. He wandered about until he came to a Quaker meeting-house, where he entered, sat down, and went to sleep. At the close of the worship he was awakened.

† The printing-press on which Franklin worked while in London was afterwards removed to the National Museum at Washington city.

‡ Franklin was married, at the age of twenty-four, to a young widow. He had two children, a son and

Philadelphia Library. Inscribed upon a stone at the southeast corner of the building containing the library are words to this effect:—Be it remembered, in honor of the Philadelphia youth, that they cheerfully, at the instance of Benjamin Franklin, one of their number, instituted the Philadelphia Library, which, though small at first, is become highly valuable and extensively useful.

In reading the voluminous writings of Benjamin Franklin, one cannot but admire his prolific genius,—his desire to project schemes for the PUBLIC GOOD. Had he pursued the business of a *tallow-chandler*, instead of learning to set types and work at the press, it is quite probable he would have *enlightened* the world by his genius; for

a daughter. His son was royal governor of New Jersey before the Revolution, and died in England. The daughter married a gentleman of Philadelphia, and their descendants are among the first families of that city.

At the age of sixty-two, Franklin, in a letter to a friend, on early marriages, said, “I am rather inclined to think that early ones stand the best chance of happiness. The temper and habits of the young are not become so stiff and uncomplying as when more advanced in life. . . . Late marriages are often attended with the misfortune of the parents not living to see their offspring educated. ‘Late children,’ says the Spanish proverb, ‘are early orphans.’” Franklin compared a life of celibacy to an odd volume of a set of books, which bears not the value of its proportion to the entire set; and to the odd half of a pair of scissors, which cannot well cut any thing, but may serve to scrape a trencher.

"he had a head to conceive,* and a hand to carry into execution, whatever he thought would conduce to enlighten the subject-matter of which he treated." He organized fire companies in Philadelphia, the first on the American continent. He projected the American Philosophical Society, the Pennsylvania Hospital, and the Pennsylvania University.

In relation to this university Franklin said that he had the very great pleasure of seeing a number of the youth who received their education in it distinguished by their improved abilities, serviceable in public stations, and ornaments to their country.

Much, indeed, Franklin accomplished for the benefit of his fellow-men,—for YOUTH.

"ARRIVING AT MORAL PERFECTION."

AT the age of twenty-six, Franklin conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection ; it was his praiseworthy desire to live without committing any fault at any time. Accordingly, for his self-government, he wrote the names of thirteen virtues, and annexed to each a

* He invented the celebrated stove which bears his name. This invention he gave to the public. "As we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others," says he, "we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours."

short precept, which fully expressed the extent he gave to its meaning. The names of the virtues were TEMPERANCE, Silence, Order, Resolution, Frugality, Industry, Sincerity, Justice, Moderation, Cleanliness, Tranquillity, Chastity, and Humility. The precept he attached to Resolution was, "Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve." To the virtue of Industry he subjoined the precept, "Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; and cut off all unnecessary actions." Annexed to the virtue of Sincerity was the precept, "Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and if you speak, speak accordingly."

Franklin judged it would be well not to distract his attention by attempting the practice of all these virtues at once, but to fix it on one of them at a time. He sought to acquire the virtue of *temperance* first, "as," said he, "it tends to procure that coolness and clearness of head, which is so necessary where constant vigilance is to be kept up, and a guard maintained against the unremitting attraction of ancient habits and the force of perpetual temptations; this being acquired and established, *silence* would be more easy."

" THE SPECKLED AXE."

THE virtue of *order*, however, gave Franklin the most trouble to acquire. "My faults in it

vexed me so much," said he, "and I made so little progress in amendment, and had such frequent relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the attempt and content myself with a faulty character in that respect." He compared himself to a man who bought an axe of a smith. The man desired the smith to make the whole surface of the axe as bright as the edge. The smith consented to grind the axe bright on condition that the man would turn the wheel. The man turned, but the axe was pressed so heavily on the stone that he became much fatigued, and said he would take the axe as it was without further grinding. 'No,' replied the smith, 'turn on, turn on, as yet it is only speckled.' 'Yes,' said the man, 'but I think *I like a speckled axe best.*' Many people, remarked Franklin, have found great difficulty in acquiring good and breaking off bad habits, and have given up the struggle and concluded that "a speckled axe is best."

FRANKLIN ON SCANDAL,—INTEMPERANCE,—VIRTUE AND HEALTH,—RICHES.

Scandal.—FRANKLIN, in one of his early essays, over the signature of *Alice Addertongue*, portrays a habit in which some people excel,—that of scandal. Dryden says,—

"On eagles' wings immortal *scandals* fly,
While virtuous actions are but born to die."

Franklin's *Miss Addertongue* says,—“I am a young girl of about thirty-five, and live at present with my mother. I have no care upon my head of getting a living, and therefore find it my duty, as well as inclination, to exercise my talent at *censure*, for the good of my country-folks. There was, I am told, a certain generous emperor, who, if a day had passed over his head in which he had conferred no benefit on any man, used to say to his friends, in Latin, *Diem perdidī*, —that is, it seems, *I have lost a day*. I believe I should make use of the same expression, if it were possible for a day to pass in which I had not, or missed, an opportunity to scandalize somebody ; but, thanks be praised, no such misfortune has befall me these dozen years.

“By industry and application, I have made myself the centre of all the scandal in the province. There is little stirring, but I hear of it. I began the world with this maxim, — that no trade can subsist without returns ; and accordingly, whenever I received a good story, I endeavored to give two or a better in the room of it.”

This is but a small part of the whole essay on Scandal. The quotation, though short, is humorously pithy.

Intemperance.—Franklin says, (in relation to his working at printing in London, at the age of nineteen,) “I drank only *water*: the other workmen, near fifty in number, were great drinkers of *beer*. I thought it a detestable custom.” One of the workmen supposed it was necessary to drink strong beer, in order that he might be strong for labor. But the beer-drinkers had con-

vincing evidence that the *Water-American*, as they called Franklin, was stronger than themselves.

At a more advanced period of his life, Franklin heard an Indian say,—“The Great Spirit, who made all things, made every thing for some use ; and whatever use he designed any thing for, that use it should be put to. Now, when he made rum, he said, ‘*Let this be for the Indians to get drunk with*’ ; and it must be so.”

Franklin thus comments upon the Indian’s remark :—

“ And, indeed, if it be the design of Providence to extirpate these savages in order to make room for the cultivators of the earth, it seems not impossible that rum may be the appointed means. It has already annihilated all the tribes who formerly inhabited the seacoast.”

Intemperance ! That awful scourge ! Franklin knew not its bitter sorrows, save as he beheld them in others !

The following are some of Franklin’s maxims pertaining to

Virtue and Health. — “ VIRTUE is the best preservative of health, as it prescribes TEMPERANCE, and such a regulation of our passions as is most conducive to the well-being of the animal economy ; so that it is, at the same time, the only true happiness of the mind, and the best means of preserving the health of the body.”

“ Eat and drink such an exact quantity as the constitution of thy body allows of, in reference to the services of the mind.”

"Wouldst thou enjoy a long life, a healthy body, and a vigorous mind, and be acquainted also with the wonderful works of God, labor in the first place to bring thy appetite to reason."

The following are maxims of Franklin on *Riches*.—"If you would be wealthy, think of saving as well as of getting. The Indies have not made Spain rich, because her outgoes are greater than her incomes."

"For age and want save while you may;
No morning sun lasts a whole day."

"He that wastes idly a groat's worth of his time per day, one day with another, wastes the privilege of using one hundred pounds each day."

"Let honesty and industry be thy constant companions."

FRANKLIN'S RELIGIOUS CREED FOR A SOCIETY.

At the age of twenty-seven, Franklin conceived a scheme of a society for extending the influence of virtue. The following is the substance of the religious creed which he prepared for the projected society:—.

"That there is one God, who made all things.
"That he governs the world by his providence.
"That he ought to be worshipped by adoration, prayer, and thanksgiving.

"But that the most acceptable service to God is doing good to man.

"That the soul is immortal.
"And that God will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, either here or hereafter."

THE
MANHOOD AND OLD AGE
OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

"Life glides away, Lorenzo, like a brook.
The man of wisdom is the man of years."

"THE WASTE OF LIFE."

"O MY wasted manhood!" has been the exclamation of many, very many men, endowed by Nature with excellent qualities of mind. But this was not the exclamation of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN. He, by a wise use of his time and talents, although born in poverty and obscurity, raised himself to a state of affluence and to an honorable distinction among men.

In an essay on "The Waste of Life," he describes a man who spent ten hours of the twenty-four in his bed, and dozed away two or three more on his couch, and dissolved as many in *liquor* every evening, if he met with company of his own humor; five or six of the rest he sauntered away in indolence, beguiling the time with thoughts about the sustenance of his body, because he

knew not how to employ them better. Thus many years of his life passed away ; but at length he reflected upon his shameful *waste of time*, and carried on his moral reflections with so just and severe a force of reason, as constrained him to change his whole course of life, to break off his follies at once, and to apply himself to gain some useful knowledge, when he was more than thirty years of age. The world stood amazed at the mighty change in the man. He lived many years, and made a shining figure as a patriot in the senate-house. He died a Christian, with a peaceful conscience, and the tears of his country were dropped upon his tomb.

This is but a very meagre outline of the essay. But it teaches the lesson, that it is never too late to do good, and that it is wise to begin early in life to cultivate good habits and to *avoid the waste of time*.*

* Franklin, at the age of twenty-six, (in 1732,) first published an almanac, commonly called "Poor Richard's Almanac," which he continued about twenty-five years, vending annually ten thousand copies. He collected many proverbs, containing the wisdom of different ages and nations, and formed them into a connected discourse, which he prefixed to the Almanac of 1757. This ingenious discourse was copied into all the newspapers of the American continent, and reprinted in foreign countries. Franklin says, that in his rambles, where he was not personally known, he frequently heard one or another of his adages repeated with, "*As Poor Richard says,*" at the end of it. This, he said, gave him satisfaction, as it not only showed that his instructions were regarded, but discovered, likewise, some respect for his authority.

The following quotation from the discourse is pertinent to the essay on "The Waste of Life":—

ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE FOR GOOD.

SOLOMON says, "Get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." It surely was the aim of Franklin to possess those "pearls of great price,"—WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING. He exhibited these great qualities of mind in the wise use he made of his knowledge. The light of his mind shone not dimly, as if "under a bushel." He desired to promote the happiness of his fellow-beings by a beneficial application of the discoveries of science, and regretted that he could not live in an age when scientific discoveries would lessen more of the "ills of life that flesh is heir to."

" Sloth, by bringing on diseases, absolutely shortens life. ' Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears; while the used key is always bright,' as Poor Richard says. ' But dost thou love life, then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of,' as Poor Richard says. How much more than is necessary do we spend in sleep, forgetting that ' The sleeping fox catches no poultry,' and that ' There will be sleeping enough in the grave,' as Poor Richard says.

" ' If time be of all things the most precious, wasting time must be', as Poor Richard says, ' the greatest prodigality'; since, as he elsewhere tells us, ' Lost time is never found again; and what we call time enough always proves little enough.' Let us, then, up and be doing, and doing to the purpose; so by diligence shall we do more with less perplexity. ' Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all easy'; and ' He that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night'; while ' Laziness travels so slowly, that Poverty soon overtakes him.' ' Drive thy business, let not that drive thee'; and ' Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise,' as Poor Richard says."

"The rapid progress *true* science now makes," said Franklin at the age of thirty, "occasions my regretting, sometimes, that I was born so soon. It is impossible to imagine the height to which may be carried, in a thousand years, the power of man over matter. Agriculture may diminish its labor and double its produce; all diseases may by sure means be prevented or cured, not excepting even that of old age, and our lives lengthened at pleasure, even beyond the antediluvian standard. O that moral science were in as fair a way of improvement, that men would cease to be wolves to one another, and that human beings would at length learn what they now improperly call humanity!"

Were the life of such a philanthropist as Franklin "lengthened at pleasure," prolonged to a thousand years, and were such philanthropists many in number, methinks the comforts of life would be more generally diffused.

"In what narrow circumstances," continues he, "stood the world's knowledge at the beginning of the fifteenth century, when men of *genius* began to look abroad and around them! It was wonderful to see a world so full of people, and people so capable of improving, yet so stupid and so blind, so ignorant and so perfectly unimproved; it was wonderful to see with what a general alacrity they took the alarm, almost all together, preparing themselves, as it were on a sudden, by a general inspiration, to spread knowledge throughout the earth, and *to search into every thing that it was possible to uncover!*"

Franklin's thirst for knowledge "grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength"; and

his benevolence incited him to apply his knowledge to good purposes. The philanthropic CHANNING says :—

“ Benevolence and a thirst for knowledge are so natural to our race, that, by cherishing them in youth, when the mind is unwarped, we can form them into *principles of action*. We will beat down with the irresistible engines of truth those strong ramparts, consolidated by time, within which avarice, ignorance, and selfishness have intrenched themselves.”

“ Genius,” says Dr. Channing, “ is a liberating power. Genius sends light into cottages.” And when men of genius, like Franklin and Channing, “ look abroad and around them,” they “ search into every thing that it is possible to uncover,” and by “ spreading knowledge throughout the earth,” the strong ramparts of superstition are beaten down.

THE ELECTRICAL KITE.

AT the age of forty Franklin began in earnest to aid the progress of TRUE science, and in a few years he made philosophical discoveries which spread his fame world-wide.

Benjamin Franklin was the first to entertain the bold thought of bringing lightning from the heavens, by means of sharp-pointed rods elevated in the air.

In the summer of 1752, while waiting in Philadelphia for the suitable erection of pointed rods, “ it occurred to him that he might have more

ready access to the region of clouds by means of a common KITE."* He accordingly prepared a kite of his own invention ; it was raised ; his expectations were not at first realized ; but, at length, "repeated sparks were drawn from the key, a phial was charged, a shock given, and all the experiments made which are usually performed with electricity." He thus established experimentally the great discovery, "that whatever properties we find in electricity are also the properties of lightning."†

* Franklin's electrical kite was made of two light strips of cedar, in the form of a small cross ; the four corners of a thin silk handkerchief being tied to the extremities of the cross, and accommodated with a tail, loop, and string. To the top of the upright stick of the cross was fixed a very sharp-pointed wire, rising a foot or more above the wood. To the end of the twine, next the hand, was tied a silk ribbon ; and where the silk and twine joined, a key was fastened.

† "A person apprehensive of danger from lightning," says he, "happening during the time of thunder to be in a house not secured by pointed rods, will do well to avoid sitting near the chimney, near a looking-glass, or any gilt pictures or wainscot ; the safest place is in the middle of the room, (so it be not under a metal lustre suspended by a chain,) sitting in one chair and laying the feet up in another. It is still safer to bring two or three mattresses or beds into the middle of the room, and, folding them up double, place the chair upon them ; for they not being so good conductors as the walls, the lightning will not choose an interrupted course through the air of the room and the bedding, when it can go through a continued better conductor, the walls. But, where it can be had, a hammock or swinging bed, suspended by silk cords equally distant from the walls on every side, and from the ceiling and floor above and below, affords the safest situation a person can have in any room whatever ; and what, indeed, may be deemed quite free from danger of any stroke by lightning." [Vide Supplement, pp. 33-35.]

FRANKLIN A MASTER OF ARTS AND DOCTOR OF LAWS.

At the age of forty-seven, Franklin made a journey to Cambridge, Massachusetts, "where the College, of their own accord," said he, "presented me with the degree of Master of Arts. Yale College, in Connecticut, had before made me a similar compliment. Thus, without studying in any college, I came to partake of their honors. They were conferred in consideration of my improvements and discoveries in the electric branch of natural philosophy." When fifty-three years of age, the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon him by the University of St. Andrew's, in Scotland. The Royal Society of London bestowed on him a gold medal, in honor of his discoveries in electricity. He was chosen a member of the society, and was excused from the customary payment of twenty-five guineas. By a judicious and unremitting improvement of time, Franklin rose to great honors. The observation of Pope, that

"Honor and shame from no condition rise,
Act well thy part, there all the honor lies,"
is very good; but one must make great mental efforts to attain the honor that Franklin acquired.

MERITED PRAISE.

"THE grand monarch of France commanded the Abbé Mazéas to write a letter in the politest terms to the Royal Society, to return the king's

thanks and compliments in an express manner to Mr. Franklin of Pennsylvania, for his useful discoveries in electricity, and application of the pointed rods to prevent the terrible effects of thunder-storms."

Dr. Channing, in the fulness of his heart, deemed it "a privilege to have lived in an age so stirring, so pregnant, so eventful" as this; he said,—

" Its impression on history is indelible. Amidst its events, the American Revolution, the first distinct, solemn assertion of the rights of men, and the French Revolution, that volcanic force which shook the earth to its centre, are never to pass from men's minds. Over this age the night will, indeed, gather more and more as time rolls away; but in that night two forms will appear, Washington and Napoleon, the one a lurid meteor, the other a benign, serene, and undecaying star. *Another American name will live in history,—YOUR FRANKLIN;* and the KITE which brought lightning from heaven will be seen sailing in the clouds by remote posterity, when the city where he dwelt may be known only by its ruins."

The important services of Franklin as a statesman have been recorded on the pages of history in words of the highest praise. It would be unjust, however, to say that he "toiled for praise," either as a statesman or a philosopher, although Dr. Young says,—

"The love of praise, howe'er concealed by art,
Reigns, more or less, and glows in every heart;
The proud, to gain it, toils on toils endure;
The modest shun it, but to make it sure."

Nor would it be just to say that Dr. Franklin “shunned praise to make it sure” :—it was spontaneously bestowed upon him by his fellow-beings for *his real good works*.

PUBLIC OFFICES HELD BY FRANKLIN.

FRANKLIN spent more than half a century of his life in public offices and trusts, among which were the following. He was chosen clerk of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania. He held the office of postmaster of Philadelphia, and also that of postmaster-general. He was a delegate to a general convention held at Albany, where he proposed a plan of union for the colonies, which was adopted by the convention. He was a commissioner for appropriating public money for military defence. He was colonel of a regiment. He was deputed by the Assembly of Pennsylvania, in 1757, to present a petition to the king, and to act in England as an agent for Pennsylvania. On his return to Philadelphia, at the expiration of five years, he was publicly thanked by the Assembly, and the sum of twenty thousand dollars was presented to him “for his many services, not only to the province of Pennsylvania, but to America in general, during his late agency at the court of Great Britain.” He was chosen fourteen years successively a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, and filled the office of Speaker of that body ; the Assembly also appointed him as a special agent to proceed to the court of Great Britain, there to take charge of the petition for a change of government, and to manage the general affairs of the province. He held the office of president of the American Philosophical Society. He was a

member of Congress, and by that body he was appointed one of a committee to proceed to the camp at Cambridge, and confer with the commander-in-chief on the most efficient mode of continuing and supporting a continental army. Congress also appointed him one of the commissioners to go to Canada for the transaction of important business; and he was one of a committee of five, chosen by Congress, to prepare a DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. He voted for its adoption, and signed it on the second of August, 1776.

Congress appointed Benjamin Franklin, with Silas Deane and Arthur Lee, "to transact the business of the United States at the court of France."* On Franklin's return to Philadelphia, in 1785, at the age of seventy-nine, letters of congratulation were sent to him from all parts of the country. The Assembly of Pennsylvania presented an address to him, saying, "We are confident that we speak the sentiments of this whole country, when we say, that your services, in the public councils and negotiations, have not only merited the thanks of the present generation, but will be recorded in the pages of history, to your immortal honor."

The king of France appointed Dr. Franklin one of the commissioners for investigating the subject of animal magnetism. Franklin was also chosen president of Pennsylvania, and held the office three years. He was likewise a member of the Convention for framing the Constitution of the United States. This was the last public duty he performed.

* Franklin was for several years Minister Plenipotentiary at the court of France, and one of the commissioners for negotiating the treaty of peace of 1783 between the United States and Great Britain.

Surely, Benjamin Franklin filled many important offices ; but without an assiduous cultivation of his mind, from boyhood to old age, he could not have filled those offices so satisfactorily as he did. Socrates, the great Athenian philosopher, endeavored to persuade Charmidas, a man of sense, but of a modest disposition, to put himself forward and undertake public business, as being very capable of it. The American people, likewise, persuaded Franklin to undertake public business, *as being very capable of it.*

A celebrated French historian, speaking of Franklin's diplomatic mission to France, says :—

“ Men imagined they saw in him a sage of antiquity, come back to give austere lessons and generous examples to the moderns. This venerable old man, it was said, joined to the demeanor of Phocion the spirit of Socrates. Courtiers were struck with his native dignity, and discovered in him the profound statesman. His virtues and his renown negotiated for him ; and before the second year of his mission had expired, no one conceived it possible to refuse fleets and an army to the compatriots of Franklin.”

Dr. Franklin, it must be confessed, received the praise of all men ; and well he deserved it, if a constant aim to do good and not to do evil is meritorious. “ The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones,” said the great Shakspeare. The good that the great Franklin performed fortunately

lives after him, and if he did any evil, it has been or should be forgiven.

* * * While a **PRINTER**, he doubtless committed *errors*: but in all probability he *corrected* some of them; those which he did not correct will eventually be *worked off* by the *power press* of time. At the age of twenty-three, he wrote a curious epitaph, which cannot fail to make an *impression* on the reader; it was in the following words:—

“The body of Benjamin Franklin, Printer, (like the cover of an old book, its contents torn out, and stript of its lettering and gilding,) lies here food for worms. But the work shall not be lost, for it will, as he believed, appear once more, in a new and more elegant edition, revised and corrected by **THE AUTHOR.**”

DEATH OF DR. FRANKLIN.

“We can behold how merit lies in ashes.”

DR. FRANKLIN had been afflicted with a painful disease for several years. A few days before his death, he was seized with pains, which continued to increase. While suffering under their severity, “he would observe, that he was afraid that he did not bear them as he ought;—acknowledging his grateful sense of the many blessings he had received from the Supreme Being, who had raised him, from small and low beginnings, to such high rank and consideration among men.” He died on the 17th day of April, 1790, in the eighty-fifth year of his age. A vast concourse of people followed his body to the grave. Congress directed a universal mourning throughout the United States for thirty days. Throughout Europe the news of his death was received with demonstrations of grief. Rochefoucauld and Lafayette both rose in the National Assembly of France, to second a decree to wear mourning three days for him. Mirabeau, in the Assembly, thus commenced an eloquent eulogy:—

“Franklin is dead! The genius, that freed America and poured a flood of light over Europe, has returned to the bosom of the Divinity.”

SUPPLEMENT.

SELECTED OBSERVATIONS OF DR. FRANKLIN ON ELECTRICITY AND OTHER SUBJECTS.

“ THOSE who calculate chances may perhaps find, that not one death (or the destruction of one house) in a hundred thousand happens from that cause, [being struck by lightning,] and that therefore it is scarce worth while to be at any expense to guard against it. But in all countries there are particular situations of buildings more exposed than others to such accidents, and there are minds so strongly impressed with the apprehension of them, as to be very unhappy every time a little thunder is within their hearing ; it may therefore be well to render this little piece of new knowledge as general and as well understood as possible, since to make us *safe* is not all its advantage ; it is some to make us *easy*. And as the stroke it secures us from might have chanced, perhaps, but once in our lives, while it may relieve us a hundred times from those painful apprehensions, the latter may possibly, on the whole, contribute more to the happiness of mankind than the former.”

* * * * *

“ All metals and water are good conductors of lightning. Other bodies may become conductors by having some quantity of water in them, as wood, and other materials used in building ; but, not having much water in them, they are not good conductors, and therefore are often damaged in the operation.

“ Glass, wax, silk, wool, hair, feathers, and even wood, perfectly dry, are non-conductors ; that is, they resist instead of facilitating the passage of this subtle fluid.”

"Buildings that have their roofs covered with lead or other metal, and spouts of metal continued from the roof into the ground to carry off the water, are never hurt by lightning, as, whenever it falls on such a building, it passes in the metals and not in the walls."

"As electrified clouds pass over a country, high hills and high trees, lofty towers, spires, masts of ships, chimneys, &c., as so many prominences and points, draw the electrical fire, and the whole cloud discharges there. Dangerous, therefore, is it to take shelter under a tree during a thunder-gust. It has been fatal to many, both men and beasts. It is safer to be in the open field. When the clothes are wet, if a flash in its way to the ground should strike your head, it may run in the water over the surface of your body; whereas, if your clothes were dry, it would go through the body, because the blood and other humors, containing so much water, are more ready conductors. Hence a wet rat cannot be killed by the exploding electrical bottle, when a dry rat may."

* * * * *

"The flesh of animals, fresh killed in the usual manner, is firm, hard, and not in a very eatable state, because the particles adhere too forcibly to each other. At a certain period, the cohesion is weakened, and, in its progress towards putrefaction, which tends to produce a total separation, the flesh becomes what we call tender, or is in that state most proper to be used as our food.

"It has frequently been remarked, that animals killed by lightning putrefy immediately. This cannot be invariably the case, since a quantity of lightning sufficient to kill may not be sufficient to tear and divide the fibres and particles of flesh, and reduce them to that tender state which is the

prelude to putrefaction. Hence it is that some animals killed in this manner will keep longer than others. But the putrefaction sometimes proceeds with surprising celerity. A respectable person assured me, that he once knew a remarkable instance of this. A whole flock of sheep in Scotland, being closely assembled under a tree, were killed by a flash of lightning ; and, it being rather late in the evening, the proprietor, desirous of saving something, sent persons early the next morning to flay them ; but the putrefaction was such, and the stench so abominable, that they had not the courage to execute their orders, and the bodies were accordingly buried in their skins. It is not unreasonable to presume, that, between the period of their death and that of their putrefaction, a time intervened in which the flesh might be only tender, and only sufficiently so to be served at table. Add to this, that persons who have eaten of fowls killed by our feeble imitation of lightning, (electricity,) and dressed immediately, have asserted that the flesh was remarkably tender."

* * * * *

" Dr. Lister is of opinion, that the material cause of thunder, lightning, and earthquakes is one and the same, viz., the inflammable breath of the pyrites, which is a substantial sulphur, and takes fire of itself. Thunder, which is the effect of the trembling of the air, caused by the same vapors dispersed through it, has force enough to shake our houses ; and why there may not be thunder and lightning under ground, in some vast repositories there, I see no reason ; especially if we reflect that the matter which composes the noisy vapor above us is in much larger quantities under ground. The earth abounds in cavities, which are, at certain times and in certain seasons, full of inflammable vapors."

"It is incredible the quantity of good that may be done in a country by a single man, who will *make a business* of it, and not suffer himself to be diverted from that purpose by different avocations, studies, or amusements. For my own part, when I am employed in serving others, I do not look upon myself as conferring favors, but as paying debts. I am for doing good to the poor, but I differ in opinion about the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor is, not making them easy *in* poverty, but leading or driving them *out of* it."

"There is no rank in natural knowledge of equal dignity and importance with that of being a good parent, a good child, a good husband or wife, a good neighbor or friend, a good subject or citizen, that is, in short, a good Christian."

"When old people have long lived in a house, it becomes natural to them ; they are almost as closely connected with it as the tortoise with his shell."

"Methinks, to build a new church in a growing place is not properly *dividing*, but *multiplying* ; and will really be the means of increasing the number of those who worship God in that way. I had for several years nailed against the wall of my house a pigeon-box, that would hold six pair ; and, though they bred as fast as my neighbors' pigeons, I never had more than six pair, the old and strong driving out the young and weak, and obliging them to seek new habitations. At length, I put up an additional box, with apartments for entertaining twelve pair more ; and it was soon filled with inhabitants, by the overflowing of my first box, and of others in the neighborhood. This I take to be a parallel case with the building a new church here."





